DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 150 946 IR 005 044

AUTHOR Lent, John A.
TITLE The Guiding Light: Mass Media and National Ideology Formation and Propagation in Third World Nations.
PUB DATE 12 Mar 77
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Culture and Communication Conference (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 12, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Authoritarianism; Censorship; *Communications; *Developing Nations; Freedom of Speech; *Government (Administrative Body); *Mass Media; Nationalism; New Journalism; Policy; *Political Attitudes; *Propaganda

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the evolution of development journalism into development communication, concentrating in the process on what has happened to government-media relationships and traditional freedom of the press notions as Third World presses are subjected to guidance policies and rampant authoritarianism. It looks at the use of mass media in the formation and propagation of national ideologies and campaigns, and analyzes the support given to development communication and the creation of national communication policy by supranational agencies. The conclusion raises several questions. How and when will rulers allow more freedom of expression and who will decide when is the right time? To what extent are the media promoting campaigns and officials rather than the development programs themselves? Are supranational organizations such as UNESCO allowing themselves to be victims of blackmail from Third World governments? These and other questions must be answered soon if a large part of the world is to be saved from the Orwellian big brother syndrome which some critics are predicting. (VT)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED150946

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

John A. Lent

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

THE GUIDING LIGHT:
MASS MEDIA AND NATIONAL IDEOLOGY FORMATION AND PROPAGATION IN THIRD WORLD NATIONS

by

John Lent
Professor of Communications
School of Communications and Theatre
Temple University
Philadelphia Pa. 19122

Paper presented at "Culture and Communication" Conference,
Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa., March 12, 1977.

IR005044

The Guiding Light:
Mass Media and National Ideology Formation and Propagation in Third World Nations

by John A. Lent
Professor of Communications
Temple University

A phenomenon that has swept through the Third World during the past decade has been that of development communication--the systematic use of communication in support of national development. An expansion of the more objective and indepth development journalism of the 1960s, the concept today is considered the main propaganda technique of numerous developing countries. It also is at the top of the list of action prerogatives of communications-oriented organizations such as UNESCO, Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC) and the International Broadcast Institute, and the bane of other agencies such as International Press Institute (IPI) and Inter American Press Association (IAPA), traditional defenders of press freedom. Academic programs in development communication have sprung up in at least Asia and the Caribbean, and many regional organizations, publications and conferences are dedicated to the propagation of the concept.

The purposes of this paper are to: 1. discuss the evolution of development journalism into development communication, concentrating in the process on what has happened to government-media relationships and traditional freedom of the press notions as Third World presses are subjected to guidance policies and galloping authoritarianism; 2. look at the use of

I am indebted to Bob Roberts of Temple University for providing materials for this paper.

mass media in the formation and propagation of national ideologies and campaign; 3. analyze the support given to development communication and the creation of national communication policy by supranational agencies.

Evolution of Development Communication

The individuals who conceived development journalism in the 1960s believed that because national development depends so heavily upon economics, there should be better trained and informed economics specialists among journalists, to cover and report fully, impartially and simply the myriad problems of a developing nation. Development journalism came out of Asia--more specifically the Philippines--through the efforts of journalists such as Juan Mercado and Alan Chalkley. Mercado, director of the Philippine Press Institute from 1963, was using this organization in the mid-1960s to sponsor numerous seminars on developmental topics and, in conjunction with the Philippine News Service, to implement policies on news coverage which helped report development. For example, one such project of 1968 involved sending PNS reporters into libraries to abstract and write in layman language about current research carried out on development subjects by scholars. Chalkley, in the meantime, was conceptualizing development journalism at various seminars and writing the first manual on the subject.

Elsewhere in Asia, others such as Chanchal Sarkar, director of the Press Institute of India; Amitabha Chowdhury, head of the Asian Programme of IPI; Maasaki Kasagi of Nihon Shinbun Kyokai, and Mochtar Lubis, editor of Indonesia Raya, recognized that new directions were necessary in reporting Asia because of the "cumulative effect of the growth of national economics, changes in the character and profile of the audience and, above all, the results of peoples' experiments and frustrations with new political systems." The result was the formation of the Press Foundation of Asia, an organization endowed by Asian

newspapers and Ford Foundation, which from its inception in March 1967, was dedicated to promoting development journalism. In fact, PFA coined the term "development journalism" when, in 1968, it brought to completion its first long-term training course for a group of economics writers. By mid-1969, the PFA had spelled out the target for its program in development journalism;

> This was to offer 250 newsmen over the next three years an opportunity to train themselves at Asia's first corps of development journalists. To back up the training given in seminars, they will be fed on a weekly news and feature service offering exemplary copies on the same news beat--development. 2

The idea was to use a news agency operation as a training device; the agency, DEPTHnews, an acronym for development, economics and population theme concentrating on indepth reporting, had over 200 outlets by the early 1970s. DEPTHnews, through the work of Mercado and Chalkley, experimented with a news style that eventually stood out as a symbol of new journalism for developing countries. In 1972, PFA signed contracts with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities to insure that population be told as a development story. Among the programs that resulted were seven additional editions of DEPTHnews in different Asian languages, a pictorial edition of DEPTHnews, more training courses to produce development journalists and a weekly reference bulletin (Data for Decision) to help journalists put their daily stories in the context of national and regional developments.

In summary, development journalism was initiated by journalists and funded by non-government contributions to insure that the development story was covered indepth, but simply enough for mass consumption.

In the early 1970s, however, as Third World governments realized that development journalism could be useful in pushing their ideologies and campaigns, the term was transformed into commitment journalism systematically

applied to a nation's problems. At the same time, it was widened to include all aspects of communication, as evidenced in this commonly-used definition:

> Development communication is the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater economic social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential. 3

Various government ministries, with support from the United Nations and other multi-national and outside funding agencies, encouraged integrated national communication policies to tackle problems of poverty, population and health. Supranational agency "experts" became modern day Johnny Appleseeds, sprinkling the notions of development communication and development support communication throughtout the Third World.

The change that occurred moved one of the original thinkers on the subject, Alan Chalkley, to lament that development journalism had been used by government to mean "government-say-so journalism," having been "overshadowed by administrative blight" and "official flackery."[4]

Development Communication and Media-Government Relationships

The emphasis on development communication definitely changed mass media-government relationships. Governments realized that if media were to be used to implement national development strategies, then the authorities had to have control of them. The results were more employment of subtle guidelines issued to media and redefining of traditional machinery that could be used when necessary.

Thus, guidance and cooperation became the key words in media relationships with government. The explanations from Third World leaders went something like this: Because Third World nations are newly emergent, they need time

to develop their institutions. During this initial period of growth, stability and unity must be sought; criticism must be minimized and the public faith in governmental institutions and policies must be encouraged. Media must cooperate, according to this guided press concept, by stressing positive, development-inspired news, by ignoring negative societal or oppositionist characteristics and by supporting governmental ideologies and plans.[5] The result was that two value systems hit head on. In the traditional one, the press is the watchdog of government and supervisor of the public good; in the newer one, the press is the tool of development, deferring to authority and usually propagandizing for officialdom.[6]

The split in ideologies that this forced cooperation of media with government has evoked is evident in numerous places. A European editor pointed out the shortcomings of this cooperative spirit in these words:

> The arguments are very seductive that what such (developing) a society needs is calm progress and that this can best be achieved if the faith of the people is maintained in their government and society, At its extreme, this doctrine equates an embarrassing truth about government failure with an attack on national security. This doctrine must be resisted...There are two reasons of especial importance for a developing society to be skeptical of censorship. Where there is no criticism, the quietness is that of stagnation. Secondly, if there cannot be change, by free discussion with all its embarrassment--there will be change by violence. 7

At the 1974 Asian Regional Mass Media Conference in Kuala Lumpur, for example, independent pressmen clung to Western concepts of press freedom, while government media personnel believed that "the Press should note the special conditions (immature democracy) in which they were working."

To overcome this dichotomy of values, Third World leaders have resorted to redefining concepts such as democracy and press freedom to meet Third World goals. They say that in their efforts to help their people and to strive for national unity, they cannot afford an irresponsible press which determines their efforts. In effect, they say, "he who is not with us is against us."[8] As one writer recently noted:

> Developing economies needed to marshal all their resources, including human ones, in the national task of achieving progress towards prosperity, so that anyone who opposed or even questioned national aims was impeding that progress and was thus at best unpatriotic and at worst a traitor.9

At other times, the explanation is that press freedom is not a top priority of a developing nation, that the emphasis must be on a satisfying immediate material needs--food, shelter, health. Another reason officials give for not accepting the "luxury of Western style press freedom" is that developing nations face internal and external threats of instability.[10] As a Nigerian editor explained:

> A news item or editorial concerning government that would raise eyebrows in London can incite inter-tribal riots or violent anti-government demonstrations in a African country. It may bring down a government, and when there is no organized opposition party, or where it is not ready to be the alternative government, there will be anarchy.11

Investigative and critical journalism, as practiced in the West, is inhibited in the Third World, other officials explain, by cultural traits such as respect for elders. As one writer said:

> But in practically all developing countries where there have been strong traditional groups, village or tribal, the idea that there should be universal freedom of expression is often impossible for the individual to accept. From infancy he will have been conditioned by that attitude that it is wrong to speak and sometimes even to think privately, until duly honoured elders and superior persons have voiced their views. Since he himself expects that in the fullness of time he will become an elder, he sees little purpose in changing this tra[illegible]or in favour of corporate equality of expression of opinion. 12

African editors, according to Lateef Jakande, a Nigerian editor, are often told that because they serve nations with lower levels of education, voices of dissent cannot be tolerated. It is further explained to them that Western concepts of freedom of press are "alien to Africa."[13]

Among Third World leaders, Adam Malik, foreign minister of Indonesia, in a 1974 speech before the International Press Institute, subordinated press

freedom to the duty of implementation the "national consensus" and preserving the "existing value system" of the community,[14] while Indira Gandhi has voiced similar statements as those above, saying that the press should act as the guardian of the weaker sections, taking a role in family planning or rural problems.[15] And, Forbes Burnham, prime minister of Guyana, has said the press must be "an agency for pushing the development of the nation in the context of government policy," and that media must understand the objectives of the state and abide by those objectives "as any other citizen has to."[16]

Authoritarian Trends

Simultaneous with these exhortations from government officials has been the growth of a wide variety of authoritarian tendencies in the Third World. One dominant trend is towards centralized government, with one strong person rule and in-family power concentrations. These ruling cliques, when they find they cannot cope with communal strife or dissent, simply shuffle aside constitutional guarantees by issuing emergency or martial law decrees. This is prevalent in all parts of the developing world; nearly all Asian nations have gone--or are going--through this phase, and the large number of military governments of Africa and Latin America attest to these measures having been used there.[17]

Under such trying conditions, maintaining an independent press becomes virtually impossible as governments promulgate and alter press laws, suspend newspapers and arrest journalists, restructure media to include more official management and ownership, levy economic sanctions against mass media and control foreign correspondents and the images they impart of the developing world.

A few examples of the insecure nature of the press in the Third World are in order. Licensing of newspapers has become the norm in many parts of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean; precensorship has been used to harass editors in numerous nations (especially in India until the recent elections), and information about government is more difficult to obtain generally, except that

provided by government information services in the guise of development news. For example, in Brunei, no statements are issued concerning cabinet meetings; in most of the Caribbean, press conferences are nearly non-existent. In Kuwait, even private citizens are prevented from giving interviews unless arranged by government. Foreign publications are censored or withheld; press councils are set up by governments, rather than by media, to regulate the press (the latter is especially true is Egypt and parts of Asia such as Philippines, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Burma); editors are arrested, injured or killed for what they write and newspapers that do not toe the government line are suspended. In some cases, such as Indonesia in 1965, Philippines in 1972, Thailand in 1976 and Indochina in 1975, entire segments of the newspaper industry have been wiped out by the officials.

Newspapers and other media are joining broadcasting as government properties, this being especially evident in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Burma, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia where all newspapers are state owned. The 1975 takeover of the Times of Zambia by Zambian authorities left only two dailies in the Commonwealth East and Central Africa in private hands.[18] That same year, New Nigerian and Daily Times were confiscated by Nigerian military officials. In Latin America, the Peruvian government has confiscated six independent dailies in Lima in recent months, and of Sri Lanka's three major newspaper groups, the government has closed one and gained control over the other two. Similar threats of delinking India's groups and placing them in government hands have been voiced since 1975.

Asian and African nations also are controlling domestic and foreign information flow through management and ownership of news services. In most of Asia, the trend has shifted to one national news service, often government owned and controlled, which screens all domestic and foreign news, including

that from international services. In nations with more than one news service, the trend is for governments to urge merger for easier scrutinization. In early 1976, the four major agencies of India "agreed" to merge into Samachar; the South Korean government in 1974 merged three major services in Seoul, and the government owned news agencies are, for the most part, government owned, and in 1976, there was fear that the new Nigerian news agency would be similarly controlled.[19]

Bent on creating favorable international impression, many Third World countries have begun to pay closer attention to the foreign correspondents in their midst--chastising them for screening developing nations' events through Western biases; favoring those who are sympathetic to local governmental policies; punishing those who are not. Penalties include stiffer entrance requirements, denial of access to newsworthy persons and events , pre-publication censorship and expulsion from the country.

The rationale given by Third World leaders for these actions has been that the much vaunted free flow of information has become a one-way movement, and that, as pointed out in the New Delhi meeting of information ministers from non-aligned nations in July 1976, "the majority of countries are reduced to being passive recipients of biased, inadequate and distorted information." A result has been efforts in Africa, Latin America and the non-aligned nations generally, to pool news service resources. A Pan-African news agency has been proposed in cooperation with member nations of the Organization of African Unity; a Latin American and Caribbean news agency of consortium of national news agencies was proposed at a controversial UNESCO-sponsored meeting in Costa Rica in 1976. (See discussion later in paper.)

Promotion of National Ideologies and Campaigns

Given the increased use of guidance as a subtle means of directing the

press, supported by trends towards authoritarianism, Third World nations find it conducive to employ media to form and propagate national ideologies and campaigns. Some of these countries look to China as a model, with its heavy dependence upon interpersonal communication, use of nearly 20 million cadres, emphasis on local community management of mass media (with its serious dedication of development), unity of communication (where everything carries the message), and the educational system.[20] Other nations develop their own strategies and techniques, sometimes promoting a general ideological campaign, other times specific short-term programs.

A nation that has successfully implemented mass media to promote national ideological campaigns is Malaysia. There, mass media are implored to promote goals written into the Second and Third Malaysia Plans and the Rukunegara (National Ideology). The Rukunegara is based on the beliefs of a united nation, democratic, just, liberal and progressive society, and the principles of loyalty to king and country, belief in God, upholding of the constitution, rule of law and good behavior and morality. In carrying out the Rukunegara, mass media practice strict self-restraint, steer away from investigative reporting, fill pages with government speeches and campaigns, ignore the opposition and use a high ratio of government press releases.

For example, a survey of ratio dramas in the "Panggong Drama" (Drama Theater) series between April 1 and June 25, 1973, showed that all 12 plays promoted one or more of the principles or beliefs of the Rukunegara.[21] Writers of broadcast scripts are encouraged to stress specific goals, and rewards accrue to those who abide by these guidelines. In 1975, Radio Television Malaysia announced that script writers that year should emphasize the spirit of self-reliance, thrift and self-improvement.[22] Malaysian print media also play up developmental news through statements made by officials and press releases issued by the Department of Information, press agents of the various ministers

and the national news agency. Studying 24 issues of the largest English language and two largest Bahasa Malaysia dailies, one researcher reported that these newspapers devoted between 32 and 52 per cent of their content to national development.[23] Other studies show similar findings that media are very supportive of governmental ideologies and programs.[24]

Singaporean newspapers are advised by authorities to meet the needs of a developing country, to promote the campaigns of Lee Kuan Yew and to act solely as government mouthpieces.[25] Newspapers in Singapore are used by government to "uncover" subversive elements; but refrain from investigating matters potentially embarrassing to the leadership. Indonesian media promote Pancasila (National Ideology), a set of beliefs similar to those of Malaysia, and take guidance from both government and military officials. Philippine media contents since martial law reflect the goals of the New Society, and as in most guided nations, promote the cult of personality of the leadership. Pakistani newspapers operate under "press advice" which are telephoned guidelines provided by the administration. As part of the present development policy, Pakistani dailies are asked to display Bhutto in their advertisements to project him as a popular leader. The campaign under which media operate in Nepal is called "Communication for Development."

August 1976 media regulations by the Burmese officials stress promotion of socialism as part of the national ideology. A Central Press Registration Board encourages the publication of literature which "educate and inspire the people for active participation in socialist construction." Also in August 1976, the Burmese minister of information revealed a nine-point set of guidelines for movies and drama, requiring films which uphold Burmese culture, promote socialism, foster national unity and help eliminate "cultures repugnant to Burmese society."[26] The next month, the minister of information met with editors and publishers and conveyed a set of policy guidelines laid down by the Burma Socialist Programme Party, the main one requiring the press to co-

form with socialist policies and programs. In Tanzania, the current stress is on decentralization and participation and a new movement towards socialized development. Media are provided clearly-defined guidelines in which to work; some of the concepts which they are required to promote are community, family, socialism and cooperation.[27]

Role of Supranational Organizations

The major impetus for the adoption of development communication and national communication policies has come from supranational agencies, chief of which is UNESCO.

At a 1971 UNESCO meeting in Paris, it was proposed that in each country, a national communication policy council be formed, "made up of opinion leaders in political, economic, media, and educational sectors, and that ultimately, communication planning units evolve."[28] UNESCO thinking was that through integrated communication policies, waste would be eliminated. In short, all communication planning in any given nation would be systematized to act as an agent of planned educational and social change, and UNESCO would serve as "coordinating agent, free of political or commercial taint, at the planning and research level."[29] Explaining the philosophy behind the UNESCO plan, Alan Hancock, in 1972, assured that:

> Such a policy is not visualized as a piece of legislative censorship; nor is it seen as a planning mechanism which can be applied to the public sector only. It is intended to be a pragmatic design, in which channels and media, under both public and private ownership, are taken into account, with no more attempt to impose an autocratic structure than the culture and tradition of the country endorses. The policy proceeds from two premises. First, it must be based upon a view of the communication process as a total process, looking at media in the widest possible economic, social, and political setting, and dealing with questions of utilization and response, as much as with production and distribution channels. Second, it must be based upon a complete review of the character and capacity of the country's communication networks.30

This UNESCO philosophy, discussed in a series of conferences on regional levels in Latin America and Asia, has taken a beating since 1975, as organizations defending press freedom, such as International Press Institute (IPI),

Inter American Press Association (IAPA) Freedom House and La Federation des Editours de Journaux et Publications (FIEJ) have accused UNESCO of threatening freedom of expression. The IAPA, attacking UNESCO for inducing governments to tighten their media control, issued a statement in April 1976, saying it faced a new challenge in Latin America: "not just restrictive measures by individual governments but a threat by a world organization where authoritarian governments consistently outvote western democracies."[31] Some IAPA members said freedom of the press is guaranteed in many national constitutions of Latin America, and that any attempts by governments or international agencies to establish norms and guidelines are unconstitutional. [32]

Freedom House, an organization that monitors press and other freedoms, came down hard on UNESCO and its stand on development journalism, claiming the latter "distorts and exploits the thoroughly laudable goals of economic, political and educational development. 'Development journalism,' like deferred political freedom, presupposes--erroneously, we believe--that citizens of developing nations cannot be trusted to examine competing facts or viewpoints but must hear only a single voice."[33] Also, IPI and FIEJ signed a joint statement in October 1976, opposing any UNESCO move to sanction state control of information.

The testing ground for the implementation of the UNESCO model of national communication policies became Latin America. In July 1974, a UNESCO-sponsored meeting of 16 "experts" (from 13 nations) on communication policies in Latin America, held in Bogota, concluded that freedom of expression, when "closely and especially linked to free enterprise," constituted an imbalance in society. Commercially-owned media imposed alien cultural traits or conformity, both of which slowed social change, the conferees said. The key recommendation

of the Bogota meeting was the formulation of national communication policies which "should be the exclusive concern of the State, acting as it does on behalf of the national community."[34] The Bogota "experts" recommended four options for adoption as government policy, ranging from outright expropriation of media to direct and indirect controls.

Another UNESCO-sponsored meeting in Quito the following year dealt specifically with international news agencies, considered by the delegates as distorting news on behalf of international interests or promoting "cultural imperialism." Recommendations of the Quito group called upon Latin American governments to insure by law that government controlled national news agencies would be "exclusively empowered" to disseminate news from outside the region referring to the internal affairs of each country,[35] and to create a Latin American and Caribbean news agency with governments taking legal measures "to provide a defense against the competition of agencies outside the region,"[36] and to eventually link up with a Third World newspool.

As the results of these conferences were disclosed, UNESCO officials insisted that the agency was impartial on the role of mass media, that it only attempted to point out trends and offer alternatives. UNESCO spokesmen told IAPA and Freedom House that the recommendations of the conferences were based on personal opinions of "experts" never officially distributed by UNESCO,[37] and that UNESCO was not careful in choosing its "experts."[38] However, others such as former UNESCO Director of Public Information, Joel Blocker, thought UNESCO was taking a new direction--a political one--under Director-General Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, portrayed as being against the Western press (which he considers is irresponsible and a supporter of the status quo) and for the Third World view that mass media should be "used to mobilize support for a new international economic order that would redistribute the world's resources."[39]

Whatever the justification or repudiations of these statements were, it became clear, according to IAPA, that some governments of Latin America at least, were already adopting the conferences' ideas. For example, Mexico has established a Central Communications Office whose aim is "to nationalize public opinion"; the Costa Rican legislature is considering a law to establish the right of the state to regulate media as public services; Venezuela unsuccessfully sought to adopt a "Cultural Law" that implied press controls and is now considering a law to control advertising, and Peru has established an official news agency and controls advertising and newsprint.[40]

At another conference of international "experts," sponsored by UNESCO and held in Paris in December 1975, a draft resolution was prepared, entitled "Draft Declaration on Fundamental Principles Governing the Use of Mass Media in Strengthening Peace and International Understanding and in Combatting War Propaganda, Racism and Apartheid." At that meeting, Zionism was defined as racism, a statement that prompted a Western walkout. The remaining group removed from the 1948 United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," a paragraph which placed international media under the protection of "relevant international agreements," substituting a statement to the effect that individual states themselves are responsible "for all mass media under their jurisdiction."[41]

The findings of the Bogota and Quito meetings of "experts" were to be presented for translation into government policy at a UNESCO-sponsored Inter-Governmental Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean, scheduled for June 1976 in Quito. Meanwhile, the IAPA, at its mid-1976 session in Aruba, denounced the UNESCO recommendations as "totalitarian" and refined means in UNESCO's part to restrict press freedom. Simultaneously, IAPA and the Inter-American Broadcasters Association issued a joint statement on April 27, claiming the Inter-Governmental Conference was contrary to the UNESCO Charter and individual national constitutions.[42] The effect of the protests was that the

Ecuadorian government pulled its invitation to host the conference, and it was held instead in San Jose, Costa Rica, July 12-21, 1976.

In an effort to cool down criticisms, the UNESCO Secretariat prepared a paper for the Costa Rica meeting (at which 21 nations were represented), stating its purpose was to discuss measures to stop one-way flow of information into developing nations. UNESCO explained that this was the first of a series of intergovernmental conferences on communication policies, called to "consider the establishment of government administrative, technical, research and training infrastructures at the national and regional level for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of communication policies."[43] But, other papers prepared by the "experts" called for alternatives such as: government-run news agencies "exclusively empowered" to disseminate information from outside the country; legal measures permitting arrests of correspondents from international press organizations if their papers or news services published anything critical of the country where the correspondent was stationed, and nationalization of independent print and broadcast news.[44] Again, UNESCO explained that these were not the agency's positions, but simply views of people who prepared papers. But, IAPA, after meeting with UNESCO personnel, remained unconvinced.

The major thrust of the 32 draft resolutions which emanated from this conference was to reduce the dependency of the region on information and entertainment generated by a few wealthy nations. Conferees were concerned about existing agencies' inadequate coverage of developing nations, accusing them of "cultural aggression designed to keep the Third World in a dependence state to the big powers.[45] One of the resolutions reiterated the call for a Latin American and Caribbean news agency and pool; others allowed limitations to be placed upon content of news dispatches received by satellite, urged the development of national councils within each country that would issue guidelines to the press (proclaiming that member stations have the"urgent need to

integrate mass communication media with national planning"),[46] and recognized the "need for state investment in the mass communication sector in accordance with that sector's priorities and responsibilities within over-all development planning."

Other recommendations of the Costa Rica conference, which have not been emphasized in subsequent reports, do take into account freedom of expression and public access. According to one source:

> Other recommendations deal with the mass media as instruments for development and the need to increase access and participation for disfavoured sectors; the defence of the freedom of communication; the right of reply at the international level; the need to include the mass communication and information sector in the planning of social and economic development; principles to be taken into account in defining general objectives covering mass communication policies; the establishment of national councils for communication policy in which interested groups and basic social sectors will participate; comprehensive studies of mass media legislation in the area; and measures to make available readily accessible, low-cost means of communication. 47

The results from the Costa Rica conference were referred to the UNESCO biennial General Conference in Nairobi in October-November 1976.

By summer of 1976, reaction to the UNESCO conference was very bitter. IAPA accused the Latin American conferences of spurring the Panamanian military government into appointing a national information coordinator and national information commissioner, whose job was to define information policies. Later, at its October 1976 meeting, IAPA passed four resolutions condemning UNESCO actions.[48] Freedom House, Washington Post and London Times reports, among others, stated that UNESCO was being used quietly by the Soviet Union to curb freedom of the press.[49] Steibel, writing in Freedom at Issue, typified the latter sentiment, saying, "putting UNESCO's imprimatur on the concept of governmentally-dictated information flow would be a great step forward for Soviet-type thought control."[50]

The criticism to the contrary, the momentum of the UNESCO philosophy on development communication seemed beyond stopping by 1976. Groups such as AMIC in Singapore and the East-West Communication Institute in Honolulu held conferences on communication policy and planning for development, and lent research, planning and supervision support to UNESCO; and funding agencies for Third World projects, such as Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, seemed to acquiesce to the new thinking, while non-aligned nations met in New Delhi and Colombo to develop a Third World Newspool.

At an East-West Communication Institute conference in April, a UNESCO official sought the assistance of interested institutions in Asia on "identifying policy issues and options, developing planning tools and methodologies, examining alternative structures for policy formulation and planning, preparing programmes for the training of communication planners and promoting and assisting action in all the areas."[51]

In October, at a UNESCO-sponsored meeting of "experts" on communication policies and planning in Asia, held in Manila, it was decided that "a national communication policy would therefore create in a country the climate and the spirit of common endeavour and would help ensure the maximum, systematic, economical, integrated, and rational use of the communication resources of a country."[53] Therefore, the issues dealt with paralleled those discussed at the first such meeting in Costa Rica. The Manila meeting followed on the heels of a feasibility study of the introduction of training for communication planning in Asia, carried out for UNESCO by AMIC, an organization that was also affected by a controversial shift of power and emphasis in 1976.

The AMIC controversy also revolved around the topic of implementation of development communication. AMIC has functioned since 1971 with support of the

Singapore government and funding of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a West German organization which has bankrolled or otherwise aided development communication projects such as CEPTA-TV in Singapore, the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication in Jamaica and CIESPAL (Research and Higher Journalism Center for Latin America) in Quito. When the funding agreement between Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and AMIC expired in December 1974, ways were sought to co-fund AMIC by bringing in a Singapore institution with funding possibilities. A Singapore government representative offered continuing support through cooperation with Nanyang University and a five-year letter of agreement was signed in October 1975, in which the preservation of AMIC's regional character (an issue which had worried AMIC membership) was assured.[54] In the meantime, AMIC Director Lakshmana Rao and six other professional staff members left the orgination. Rao gave this version of the incident:

> For the past few years, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung kept assuring us that they did not plan to quit funding AMIC. Then overnight, in early 1976, they sold AMIC to the Singapore government for S $5,000. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung said they needed a co-funding agent which the Singapore government was to be. But Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung now plans to fund AMIC at the same rate as before. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung acted like a colonialist--selling a whole organization for virtually nothing. They lost in the AMIC General Assembly and other committee sessions in their bid to nationalize AMIC so they asked me to resign. When I refused, they fired me. I feel AMIC will now be a training center for Singapore media personnel. Outwardly, the organization will look like a regional training and documentation center, but it will be run by Singaporeans.55

Under the new arrangements, AMIC shifted the emphasis of its publications and seminar programs "towards development communication and related fields."[56]

Apparently Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung gave in to government pressure for an emphasis on development communication, not only in Singapore, but in Latin America as well. One of IAPA's October 1976 resolutions claimed that CIESPAL (established by UNESCO and the Ecuadorian government and funded by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, newspapers and the Organization of American States) had adopted the concept that the state should promote private owned communication systems paralleling "a State-communications system which would

foster the aims of government." IAPA resolved: "To request its members to pay greater attention to the activities of CIESPAL and to inform the OAS and Friedrich-Ebert Foundation of the IAPA's concern regarding CIESPAL's ideological positions and its teachings."

* * * * * * * *

A decisive point in initiating implementation of at least one suggestion of the UNESCO conference was reached in July 1976, when 36 information ministers and 31 national news agency heads from a total 58 non-aligned nations met in New Delhi to form a pool of their national news agencies.[57] The idea for the newspool was first mooted at the fourth summit conference of non-aligned nations at Algiers in September 1973; it was made into a resolution at the conference of ministers for foreign affairs of non-aligned nations at Lima in August 1975.[58] Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who drastically changed the picture of Indian mass media in mid-1975, gave the welcome speech at the New Delhi meeting, saying, among other things, "We want to hear Africans on events in Africa...You should similarly be able to get an Indian explanation of events in India."[59]

In August 1976, the Third World newspool was endorsed at the fifth summit conference of non-aligned countries held in Colombo. The summit's political declaration is worth noting; it declared that a new "international order in the field of information and mass communications" is necessary and that "the emancipation and development of national information media is an integral part of the overall struggle for political, economic, and social independence for a vast majority of peoples of the world who should not be denied the right to inform and be informed objectively and correctly."[60]

When UNESCO held its nineteenth General Conference in Nairobi in October-November, many of the resolutions from the Latin American conferences and the non-aligned summit were on the agenda. The most controversial item was still

the "Declaration on Fundamental Principles Governing the Use of the Mass Media in Strengthening Peace and International Understanding and in Combatting War Propaganda, Racism and Apartheid," article 12 of which said, "states are responsible for the activities in the international sphere of all mass media under their jurisdiction."[61] Western nations, especially the United States, Great Britain and France, opposed this and other articles which, by then, were obviously supported by the Soviet bloc, as previously charged.[62] After much debate,[63] the declaration was referred to a special negotiating committee, ending consideration of it until the next general conference of UNESCO in 1978.

Conclusion: It's Question Time

As development communication becomes more solidly fixed in Third World nations, a lot of questions are begging for answers. First, in the realm of media-government relationships, it is obvious that traditional concepts of freedom of press have been changed in light of the stampede for the development communication bandwagon. In some instances, government ministers have tried to temper the resultant criticism by promising to allow more freedom of expression once their nations reach their development goals. The obvious questions: Who decides that a nation has reached that goal? Assuming it has reached its desired state of development, will that nation's ruling clique, who has grown fond of hearing only good things said about it, be willing to allow the media to criticize constructively? And even if the rulers do allow for this criticism later on, will the media, after years of guidance and self-restraint, be trusting, prepared and bold enough to accept the challenge?

Concerning the use of communication for promoting national development projects in the hands of government ministries, often authoritarian ones, are the media promoting the development programs or the personalities and campaigns of the officials behind them? Where is the thin dividing line between the

two? What impact can messages disseminated by government media have in the many societies of the Third World where the people are generally suspicious of officialdom, having witnessed so much government inefficiency, corruption and insincerity in the past? If the critical function of the mass media has been stifled, how will government and the public be able to determine and respect sound and useful ideologies and campaigns and spurn vague and useless ones?

As to the dominant role supranational agencies are playing in helping set development communication priorities, many questions are in order. Is it not possible that supranational organizations are also practicing cultural imperialism and/or aggression in their attempts to integrate--homogenize or make similar--communication policies in nations with very diverse traditions? As the Third World bloc grows in numbers and strength, have not some of the supranational organizations found themselves--perhaps for fear of being termed pro-Western, racist or imperialistic--victims of Third World blackmail? Is it not possible that, as the Third World nationalized, and otherwise controlled larger segments of its mass media, the UNESCO panels of "experts" setting national and international communication policies are and will be made up of disproportionately-larger representations of government media personnel bent on promoting more stringent controls?

These numerous other questions must be answered soon if a large part of the world is to be saved from the Orwellian big brother syndrome which some critics are predicting. For the tendencies are with us--tendencies towards the establishment of national communication policies to promote national ideologies, development plans and positive governmental and political news; tendencies towards redefinitions (similar to Newspeak?) of press freedom, democracy and free flow of information, substituting instead guided presses and democracies and a balanced flow of information; tendencies towards

regional and international integration and homogenization of communication policies and programs with the help of big brother in the supranational organization.

Footnotes

1 "Press Foundation of Asia and Its Evolution." New Delhi: Statesman Press. 1973, p. 1.

2 Ibid., p. 8

3 Nora C. Quebral, "What Do We Mean by Development Communication?" International Development Review, February 1973, P. 25.

4 Alan Chalkley, "Development Journalism Is NOT 'Government Say So Journalism.'" Media, May 1975, p. 27.

5 See John A. Lent, "Press Freedom in Asia: The Quiet, but Completed, Revolution," forthcoming in Gazette.

6 Media, June 1974, p. 5.

7 Harold Evans, "Stewardship of the Mass Media." paper presented to One Asia Assembly, New Delhi, February 5-8, 1973.

8 J. Clement Jones. "How Free Is the Press in the Commonwealth Countries?" Indian Press, May 1975, p. 11.

9 Asia 1977 Yearlook, Hong Kong:Far Eastern Economic Review, 1977, p. 13.

10 Ernest Corea, "Should Newspapers in Asia be Freed?" Media Asia. 1:2, 1974. p. 10

11 Derek Ingram, "Commonwealth Press: The Years of Challenge in the New Framework of World Information, "Commonwealth, February-March 1976. p. 6.

12 Jones, op. cit., p. 10.

13 Sig Gissler, "World Press Freedom: A Wingspread Symposium," Racine, Wisconsin: The Johnson Foundation, 1974, p. 15.

14 Eduardo Lachica. "IPI Draws Back from the Brink," Media, June 1974. p. 5.

15 D. V. Nathan, "Is Our Journalism Meaningful?" Indian Press, January 1977, p. 11.

16 IPI Report, February 1976, pp. 1. 10.

17 See Asia 1977 Yearbook, op. cit., pp. 19-20; also Lucien W. Pye. "The State of Freedom in Asia," Freedom at Issue, January-February 1976, p. 24.

Footnotes

18 Ingram, op. cit., p. 6.

19 IPI Report, August 1976, pp. 5-6.

20 Godwin Chu, et al., Communicati and Development in China, Honolulu: East-West Communication Institute, Communication Monography Vo. 1, 1976, pp. 90-97 (Chu and his colleagues present these points of discussion on how much of China's development communication experience is transferrable to developing nations: "1. The more similar the social system, the more likely that a specific part of the Chinese experience with development communication can be satisfactorily transferred to it; 2. A non-similar state can borrow as much of the Chinese experience at it is willing to pay for socially and otherwise; 3. The lessons most developing countries can learn from the Chinese experience are more often likely to be general than to be specific ones." Chu et al., op. cit. p. 98.)

21 Hamina Dona Mustafa, "Radio Drama and the Rukunegara: A Content Analysis," Seminar paper, Ohio University, March 1975.

22 Penang (Malaysia) Star, December 29, 1974, p.8.

23 Hamina Dona Mustafa, "A Comparative Analysis of the Use of Developmental News in Three Malaysian Dailies," masters thesis, Ohio University, 1975.

24 See John A. Lent, "Mass Media in Tun Razak's Malaysia," paper presented at Miswest Conference on Asian Affairs, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, October 25, 1975.

25 See John A. Lent, "Lee Kuan Yew and the Singapore Media: 'Protecting the People,'" Index on Censorship, Autumn 1975, pp. 7-16; Simon Casady. "Leo Kuan Yew and the Singapore Media" 'Purging the Media.'" Index on Censorship. Autumn 1975, pp. 3-7.

26 Asia 1977 Yearbook, op. cit., p. 133.

27 "A Critique of Development and Communication Trends in Tanzania, the Ivory Coast, and El Salvador." Stanford, California: Stanford University, Insti-

Footnotes

tute for Communication Research, 1976, p. 1.

28 Alan Hancock, "UNESCO," in John A. Lent, Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977, p. 361.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid. , pp. 360-361.

31 "UNESCO Meeting Cancelled by Ecuadorean Government Following IAPA Protests," IAPA News, April-May 1976, pp. 1-2.

32 Ibid.

33 "Governmental Control of Press Advanced by UNESCO Conference," Freedom at Issue, September-October 1976, p. 2.

34 William Korey, "Orwell at UNESCO," Midstream, October 1976. p. 5.

35 Peter Kihss, "UNESCO is Accused on Press Freedom," New York Times, July 1 1976. p. C-3.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 "UNESCO Meeting...," op. cit., p. 2.

39 Korey, op. cit., p. 6.

40 "UNESCO Meeting," op. cit.

41 David Anable, "A Russian Threat to the International Press." Washington Post. May 25, 1976, p. A-15.

42 Korey, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

43 "Governmental Control...," op. cit., p. 2.

44 Deirdre Carmody, "Press Worried by Third World's Move to Restrict Flow of News." New York Times, July 19, 1976.

45 Deirdre Carmody, "Third World vs. Press," New York Times, August 2, 1976.

46 Harry F. Waters, "A Bow to Big Brother," Newsweek, September 6, 1976, p. 69.

47 Intermedia, October 1976, p. 12.

48 I. William Hill "UNESCO Efforts Blur Press Freedom Picture." Editor &

Footnotes

Publisher, October 23, 1976, p. 10.

49 See Gerald L. Steibel, "USSR Using Helsinki Accords to Kill Freedom Radios," Freedom at Issue, September-October 1976, p. 11.

50 Steibel, op. cit. The New York Times reported that the original directive for the UNESCO policies was proposed by the Soviet Union and Byelorussia in 1972, adding that much of the Third World was joining the communist nations and closing itself off from critical inquiry. New York Times, July 19, 1976.

51 E. Lloyd Sommerlad, "An Integrated Approach to Communication Planning," paper presented at International Conference on Communication Policy and Planning for Development, East-West Communication Institute, Honolulu, April 1976.

52 "AMIC Feasibility Study Paves Way for Manila Meeting," AMCB, September 1976, pp. 19-20

53 Interestingly, the keynote speaker was Francisco Tatad, Philippine secretary of information who was responsible for the transformation and control of that nation's press after 1972 martial law.

54 "AMIC Annual Report for 1975"; "Background Paper of August 17, 1976, from AMIC Secretariat."

55 Personal interview, Lakshmana Rao, Leicester, England, September 1, 1976.

56 Letter from Reinhard Keune, AMIC consultant, to John A. Lent, December 11, 1976. I have had a recent encounter with AMIC that bears out the shift in emphasis since a national government has become involved. In 1975, AMIC had accepted my monograph manuscript on Malaysian mass media in which I had questioned the status of press freedom in that nation. In a letter from Guy de Fontgalland of AMIC, October 8, 1976, I learned: "As for the

Footnotes

monograph on mass media in Malaysia, we had indeed been thinking of publishing it, but we were not quite sure whether we should go ahead with the publication as it contained many observations which would have been seriously contested by the authorities in Malaysia." In my reply, I said: "Of course, government officials often contest criticisms made of them....I feel, from my research, that the statements are accurate; I also feel the authorities have a right to contest the statements if they choose. However, I do not feel it is right to stop a publication from appearing for fear of reaction from government." The letter from Reinhard Keune, already cited, explained that because of internal problems at AMIC and a certain amount of unrest among members, AMIC's position as a regional institution has been rather uncertain in recent months. Keune added, "Under these circumstances, it would have been of no service for AMIC to enter into a dispute with its Malaysian membership which, to a large extent, represents government institutions."

57 Other newspools have been proposed or implemented along regional lines. At a Jakarta press seminar of ASEAN nations in February 1976, the establishment of an ASEAN News Agency to promote development journalism was called for, and at an African conference on administration and utilization of information techniques in Algiers in December 1976, a Federation of African Information Agencies was suggested to "bring together developing countries of the continent for discussing information strategies." Indian Press, January 1977, p. 49.

58 See Indian Press, August 1976, pp. 7-51, 55.

59 See IPI Report, November 1976, p. 6, which discusses the cases for and against the newspool.

60 Media, August 1976, p. 2.

51 "Item 69 of the Provisional Agenda, General Conference, Nineteenth Session.

Footnotes

UNESCO, Nairobi 1976."

62 London Times, November 2, 1976 P. 5; London Times, November 5, 1976, p. 7.

63 See speech of Ambassador John E. Reinhardt, chairman of United States delegation to Nairobi, in the Department of State news release of November 1, 1976.

The Author. Dr. John A. Lent is professor of communications at Temple University. He was a Fulbright Scholar to the Philippines in 1964-65; later, he developed the first mass communications program in Malaysia at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, a program he coordinated. He has authored or edited eight books, many monographs and over 100 articles on mass media in Third World nations. His latest books are Third World Mass Media and Their Search for Modernity: The Case of Commonwealth Caribbean, 1717-1976; Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific; Newspapers in Asia: Contemporary Trends and Problems; Asian Mass Communications: A Comprehensive Bibliography. He has lectured, chaired panels, presented papers at national and international seminars on mass communication in East Germany, United States, England, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Trinidad, Mexico, Canada, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Singapore, Philippines, India.